

eHealth QUERI Quick Start Guide

Why read this FAQ?

To learn more about the eHealth QUERI, what we do, and to make preparations before requesting support for a project.

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I. eHEALTH

What is eHealth?

eHealth involves using information and communication technologies in healthcare activities. eHealth aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare delivery.

- Consumer Health Informatics:
“a subspecialty of medical informatics which studies from a patient/consumer perspective the use of electronic information and communication to improve medical outcomes and the health care decision-making process.”
- eHealth: A new model of care
“a subdomain of CHI focused on patient-directed technologies that intersect with clinical care.”
<http://www.queri.research.va.gov/eHealth/>

Source(s):

Houston TK, Chang BL, Brown S, Kufafka R. Consumer health informatics: a consensus description and commentary from American Medical Informatics Association members. *Proc AMIA SYMP.* 2001: 269-273.

Ahern D, Phalen JM, Eaton CB. The Role of eHealth in Patient Engagement and Quality Improvement. In: Gibbons MC, ed. *eHealth Solutions for Healthcare Disparities.* New York, NY: Springer; 2008:75-92.

II. QUALITY ENHANCEMENT RESEARCH INITIATIVE (QUERI)

What is Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI)?

Veterans Affairs/Health Services Research and Development (VA/HSR&D) Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) currently focuses on ten areas of great importance related to health care for Veterans: Chronic Heart Failure, Diabetes, eHealth, HIV/Hepatitis, Ischemic Heart Disease, Mental Health, Polytrauma and Blast-Related Injuries, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke, and Substance Use Disorder. Working with health system partners to develop research that speeds improvements in Veterans' healthcare, QUERI utilizes a six-step process to diagnose gaps in performance and identify and implement interventions to address them:

- Identify priority conditions and opportunities for improving the health of Veterans.
- Identify effective practices for improving outcomes for priority conditions.
- Examine variations in existing practices, the sources of variation, and their relation to health outcomes.
- Identify and test interventions to improve the delivery of best practices.
- Evaluate the feasibility, adoption, and impact of coordinated improvement programs to spread best practices.
- Evaluate the effects of improvement programs on Veterans' health outcomes, including quality of life.

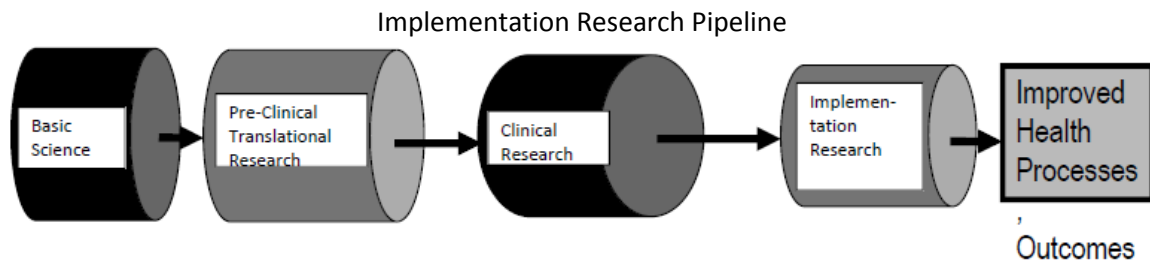
Source(s):

<http://www.queri.research.va.gov/default.cfm>

III. IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

What is implementation science?

"Implementation research is the scientific study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and other evidence-based practices into routine practice, and, hence, to improve the quality and effectiveness of health services and care. This relatively new field includes the study of influences on healthcare professional and organisational behaviour."



A list of implementation science projects can be seen on the QUERI website at:

<http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/research/>

Source(s):

Eccles M. P. & Mittman B. S. (2006). Welcome to implementation Science. *Implementation Science*, 1(1), 1-3.

http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/archives/eis-050312.pdf

IV. eHEALTH QUERI

What we are...What we are not:

The eHealth QUERI is comprised of a group of scientists and research staff pursuing eHealth-related implementation and evaluation research.

The eHealth QUERI focuses on implementing and evaluating existing eHealth tools as opposed to designing new tools. This may include testing implementation strategies and monitoring progress towards implementation goals.

The eHealth QUERI is not a point of contact for: interface design suggestions for VA systems; systems architecture or design initiatives; technical issues or technical specifications; system or application development.

Mission

The mission of the eHealth-QUERI is to work with VA program offices to implement into practice and evaluate eHealth as a model of care for augmenting efficient, safe, high-quality, continuous, coordinated delivery of evidence-based services to Veterans and their families.

Strategic Goals

If appropriately implemented and utilized, the eHealth model of care has great potential to increase access to services, and increase collaborative healthcare and self-management. The strategic goals for the eHealth-QUERI are:

- To augment access and meaningful use of eHealth tools; and
- To enhance Veteran self-management and participation in collaborative care through the design, evaluation, and implementation of appropriate eHealth tools.

See [Strategic Plan](#) for more detailed information:

http://www.queri.research.va.gov/about/strategic_plans/eHealth_QUERI_Strategic_Plan.pdf

Focal Points

The initial focus of the eHealth-QUERI has been the adoption and implementation of the My HealtheVet personal health record and its features, including Secure Messaging and the Blue Button. To date, eHealth-QUERI had provided evaluations of the impact of My HealtheVet on healthcare processes and outcomes.

VA eHealth tools

- Personal Health Records:
“a set of computer-based tools that allow people to access and coordinate their lifelong health information and make appropriate parts of it available to those who need it.”
- Mobile Health (mHealth) applications
- Point of Service Kiosks
- Patient-Facing Web Applications
- Home Telehealth applications

More recently, the eHealth QUERI has begun to evaluate VA’s new mobile (mHealth) applications. Observational work characterized much of the eHealth QUERI’s portfolio of projects in its first three years. In the next three years, the QUERI intends to embark on more interventional work.

Source(s): 2003. The personal health working group. Final report. Markle Foundation.

Primary Operational Partners

The Veterans and Consumers Health Informatics Office (V/CHIO)

My HealtheVet <http://vaww.va.gov/myhealthevet/>

Connected Health Program Office (mHealth) <https://mobilehealth.va.gov/>

National Center for Prevention (NCP) <http://www.prevention.va.gov/index.asp>

Office of Patient-Centered Care and Cultural Transformation (OPCCCT)

<http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/OPCC/default.aspx>

IV. PROPOSING A PROJECT AND SUBMITTING AN RRP/SDP

Submission Guidelines

Please see submission guidelines: [Guidelines for Obtaining a Letter of Support for QUERI Rapid Response Projects from the eHealth QUERI Center](#): <http://www.queri.research.va.gov/ehealth/eHealth-QUERI-RRP.pdf>

How we select which projects to support?

We are dedicated to supporting innovative yet pragmatic projects that align with our strategic goals (See [Strategic Plan](#): http://www.queri.research.va.gov/about/strategic_plans/eHealth_QUERI_Strategic_Plan.pdf). We will consider every proposal, but recognizably, only have the capacity to support a selection of projects.

What is the eHealth QUERI looking for?

- Innovation
- Implementation
- eHealth
- Potential for dissemination/adoption

What do you mean by innovative eHealth?

While there are many valuable ways to use eHealth tools to improve the delivery of healthcare services, because of resource limitations, the eHealth QUERI must limit its focus to those that involve the innovative application of eHealth tools and/or the developing and testing of implementation strategies. For example, posting a patient educational brochure online is not innovative.

What sorts of efforts is the eHealth QUERI looking to support?

- Developing innovative concepts
- Using current technology in an innovative way
- Increasing technology use in vulnerable groups
- We are not looking to support:
 - Projects that directly compete with existing projects

Letter of Support

To be considered for a letter of support (LOS) for QUERI Rapid Response Projects (RRP) and/or Service Directed Projects (SDP), investigators must submit a letter of intent (LOI) at least two months prior to the RRP/SDP submission deadline. Specifications can be found here: [Guidelines for Obtaining a Letter of Support for QUERI Rapid Response Projects from the eHealth QUERI Center](http://www.queri.research.va.gov/ehealth/eHealth-QUERI-RRP.pdf) <http://www.queri.research.va.gov/ehealth/eHealth-QUERI-RRP.pdf>

Scheduling a Consult

If you would like to schedule a consult to discuss a project proposal, please email Lorilei Richardson at Lorilei.Richardson@va.gov to coordinate a meeting with eHealth QUERI leadership. Prior to the consult, you will be asked to provide a synopsis or aims page about your IDEAS.

VI. CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

How do I find out about career opportunities with the eHealth QUERI?

The Federal government's official job list: www.USAJobs.gov and www.va.gov/jobs

VII. OTHER INFORMATION AND RESPONSES TO COMMON QUESTIONS

To find out more about other VA research projects, here is a link to the HSR&D database for funded abstracts:

<http://www.hsrds.research.va.gov/publications/citations/>

A list of completed HSR&D studies and completed projects is located at:

<http://vawww.hsrds.research.va.gov/research/completed.cfm>

What is the policy on email contact between patient and provider allowed within the VA (is only Secure Messaging allowed?)?

VA policy regarding patient-provider email contact: Secure Messaging through My HealtheVet is the only approved way for patients and providers to communicate electronically.

To learn more about OIT (OIT determines performance and security characteristics) contact for OIT approval, see :

<http://www.oit.va.gov/>

Are VA Apps developed by contractors or within VA?—Are there guidelines/standards, technical requirements, or style requirements?

The development is being done by contractors for VHA. Guidelines on technical and style are in the works, check the mHealth website for updates: <https://mobilehealth.va.gov/>